

412TW-PA-24196



AFFTC HISTORY – INFORMATION ON PILOT JACKIE COCHRAN

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AIR FORCE FLIGHT TEST CENTER
EDWARDS AIR FORCE BASE,
CALIFORNIA

1 JUL – 31 DEC 61 VOL I

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AIR FORCE FLIGHT TEST CENTER
EDWARDS AIR FORCE BASE, CALIFORNIA
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A United Air Lines DC-8 enroute from Hawaii to Los Angeles on 14 August 1961 with 123 passengers used the 15,000 foot AFFTC runway after hydraulic difficulties developed enroute. United Air Lines pilot Larry Holsinger made a no-flaps landing without mishap and rolled 10,000 feet.¹² Another United Air Lines DC-8 enroute from New York to San Francisco with 80 persons aboard on 28 September 1961 was successfully landed by United Air Lines pilot Captain Stan Anderson following an in-flight hydraulic failure.¹³ That save was followed on 2 October 1961 by a Western Airlines 720 Fanjet making a successful landing after hydraulic failure developed while enroute from Mexico City to Los Angeles. Western Airlines pilot Captain Ed Shuster used almost 14,000 feet of runway in bringing his plane with 75 passengers in for a safe landing.¹⁴

World Speed Marks Established at the AFFTC

Five certified international speed courses at the AFFTC are used during official attempts to establish world speed records at various prescribed altitudes. One is a straightaway 15/25 kilometer course. The others are 100, 500, 1,000, and 2,000 kilometer closed courses. All are certified by the National Aeronautic Association, the United States representative of the Federation Aeronautique Internationale which governs world sport aeronautics. Observers verify flight data with radar and visual sighting wires at timing gates. Cameras also record flights to assure altitude, flight path, time, and other requirements are met.

Between late August and mid-October 1961 Jacqueline Cochran set eight new women's world records with the T-38 Talon.¹⁵ She

established a new mark for the United States over the 15 kilometer course on 24 August 1961 by flying the T-38 at an average speed of 844.2 miles per hour. On 7 September, Miss Cochran kept the T-38 within a precisely defined air corridor from Edwards AFB over Death Valley to a point south of Beatty, Nevada, then west towards Mount Whitney, and south over Owens Lake for return to Edwards to establish a new women's world speed record for a 500 kilometer course averaging 680.75 miles per hour. The next day Miss Cochran assaulted the 1,000 kilometer record averaging 639.38 miles per hour flying the narrow course to a point northeast of Yuma, Arizona, and back to Edwards AFB. She went on to establish a new closed course jet distance record for women on 15 September at 1,346.366 miles, a straight line jet distance record of 1,492.4 miles on 18 September, a 100 kilometer course speed record of 784.285 miles per hour on 6 October, and a peak altitude (56,072.8 feet) and sustained altitude (55,253 feet) record for women on 12 October.

On 24 November, Lieutenant Colonel Robert B. Robinson, USMC, flew a McDonnell F4H Phantom II jet over the 15 kilometer course to set a new world speed record for aircraft at 1,606.342 miles per hour.¹⁶ The previous record of 1,525.95 miles per hour was set at the AFFTC on 15 December 1959 in an Air Force F-106 by Major Joseph W. Rogers, USAF, of Air Defense Command.¹⁷

AFSC Lieutenants Orientation and Hardening Program

In mid-1961 the AFFTC was chosen along with the Aeronautical Systems Division and the Arnold Engineering Development Center to